



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEXICAN NATIONAL LIVING IN TENNESSEE INDICTED FOR TRANSPORTING, HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Mexican national living in Chattanooga, Tenn., was indicted by a federal grand jury today for conspiring to transport and harbor illegal aliens in the United States.

Mario Godinez-Mendez, 30, a Mexican national living in Chattanooga, was charged in a five-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Jefferson City.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that **Godinez-Mendez** conspired to transport and harbor illegal aliens between March 8 and 15, 2005, in Missouri, Arizona and Tennessee.

Specifically, the indictment alleges, **Godinez-Mendez** was recruited to transport illegal aliens from Arizona to another state. In carrying out the task, **Godinez-Mendez** obtained a vehicle, drove it to Holbrook, Ariz., met with others regarding the conspiracy and picked up 17 illegal aliens for transportation to Florida, the indictment states.

Counts Two through Four of the federal indictment each allege that **Godinez-Mendez** transported a separate illegal alien within the United States on March 15, 2005.

Count Five of the federal indictment alleges that **Godinez-Mendez** illegally entered the United States by means of false identification and was in Boone County, Mo., on July 1, 2000.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony P. Gonzalez. The case

was investigated by the Columbia, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow